

**Consumer Conference Planning Meeting**  
**Conference Room A**  
**April 22, 2009**

**Agenda**

- **Registration**
- **Speakers**
- **Presentations and Workshops**
- **Program Schedule**
- **Art Room**

**Real Voices, Real Choices**  
**Conference Planning Committee Meeting**

**Minutes**

**April 22, 2009**

**Welcome and Introductions**

Present: Robert Qualls, David Helling, Sharon Britten, Jan Wagler, Justin Idleburg, Manfred Leonhard, Mark Ohrenberg, and Helen Minth (via telephone),

Staff Present: Cheryl Eads, Carol Dickneite, and Leigh Gibson

**Minutes**

Sharon Britten noted information regarding the committee's membership did not appear in the minutes of the March 24, 2009 meeting. The group discussed the omission, and asked Leigh to revise them to include the decision they made. The committee also requested to have the revision version distributed the membership.

**Presentations and Workshops**

Helen Minth briefly joined the meeting via telephone so she could report on the proposals she has received. She has received nine proposals including one about Mental Health First Aid. Fulton plans to submit one by the end of the week, and two other groups have contacted Helen about sending in proposal. The majority of the responses appear to pertain to topics of interest to people who receive psychiatric services such as peer specialist training, using poetry writing as a recovery tool, and mental health first aid.

Helen has received two proposals she thinks would be of interest to persons who have developmental disabilities, but she has not yet received one addressing the use of people first language. Mark Ohrenberg asked who submitted those proposals, but Helen could not remember. Mark mentioned he knew a group representing people who have developmental disabilities that would like to make a presentation; however, they would expect payment for their participation. Helen reported Steve Curran would to perform an interactive play that lasts for 45 minutes, but they would also expect payment. She believes the play would work well as a follow up to Gayle Bluebird's presentation on Monday evening.

The committee discussed the requests for payment, and it concluded that only the two professional speakers would receive remuneration. Mark and Helen agreed to inform those groups that compensation for their participation is not available. They will also let both groups know the committee would consider their proposals if they would be willing to donate their time. Helen plans to ask Steve Curran's group to submit the script for the play to the committee to review.

Helen reported she had numerous contacts from people who would like to participate, but who did not think they could get proposal to her by the Thursday, April 30 deadline. She asked if the committee would consider extending the due date. The committee agreed to change the date to Friday, May 8, which will give people an additional week to send their information to Helen. Leigh will arrange to have the Request for Proposal document posted on the DMH website revised so it reflects the new deadline. A notice will also go out to consumers to advise them of the change.

Helen also recommended revising the schedule to include just two tracks rather than three as originally planned. She had concerns about the limited number of proposals she has received, and she felt decreasing the number of tracks offered would ensure we have enough presentations to fill the time available. This change would also make coordinating activities at the conference easier. The committee agreed to make the change in the schedule. Helen also raised the question of the length of time allotted for each presentation. She thinks some of them would probably run longer than forty-five minutes, so she suggested the group might want to consider being flexible on that point.

Later the committee discussed the best way to review the proposals to choose the ones given at the conference. Rather than burden a three member sub-committee with the process, the members decided to have the group at large dedicate a portion part of May's meeting to it. Since Helen did not participate in that discussion, Robert Qualls agreed to send her an e-mail to advise her of the group's decision.

Mark suggested consumers might like to see a presentation that offered a panel of people from different divisions speaking about topics of interest to consumers. David Helling commented that a lot of people have expressed interest in hearing success stories. The group approved of the idea, and Robert Qualls agreed to facilitate the presentation. He will contact previous Mental Health Champions Award winners as well as other successful consumers to ask them if they would like to participate. If committee members know of anyone they would like to recommend for the panel, they should give Robert their names. The committee thought it especially important to include a youth on the panel. Jan Wagler offered to write up a request for success stories to post on the blog. Robert proposed calling the panel "Real Voices – Successful Choices." The committee approved his suggestion. This event will take place after lunch on Monday.

Jan commented that she spoke to a number of people who are Deaf attended Mental Health Awareness Day who are concerned about not receiving services. She thought it would be good

to ask them if they wanted to do a presentation about that topic. Leigh acknowledged the importance of having people from the Deaf and hard of hearing population attend the conference, but questioned whether that would be an appropriate topic for a workshop. Justin Idleburg asked whether anyone had submitted a proposal relating to housing for consumers. Nothing on that topic has come, so Leigh will ask the housing office at DMH to see if they would like to submit one.

Austen Montague plans to speak to the conference about faith-based recovery after dinner on Sunday, and Manfred Leonhard will address the group about the role employment plays in recovery Tuesday morning. The committee has not located a speaker representing people who have developmental disabilities. Mark Ohrenberg agreed to find a speaker who could speak on a topic of interest to that population by the next meeting.

The group also discussed the agenda for the final morning. At this time, the only confirmed activities are Manfred's speech, which is scheduled from 9:00 to 9:45 am, and closing remarks by Keith Schafer. Since Keith only wants to speak for about fifteen minutes, that leaves about two hours to fill. The suggested agenda shows a fifteen minute break followed by workshops from 10:00 to 10:45 am, but the group would like to give the people who attend the conference an opportunity to process their experiences and make recommendations as to what they would like to see happen at next year's conference. The group did not come to any final decisions, but this kind of activity would require a facilitator who could pose questions to the audience to encourage discussion. No one had any recommendations as to the length of the session, who could serve as a facilitator or what questions to ask. The other activity the group would like to see on the final day is drawings for door prizes. The number of prizes available would determine the length of that session.

## **Logistics**

Helen reported she would need additional assistance with logistics due to Anita Morrison leaving the committee. The committee agreed to offer her any support she needed. Tan-Tar-A has indicated their intention to provide only two tables for us to use when checking in attendees. The committee would prefer three tables, so Leigh will ask the hotel for another one. Carol Dickneite, Cheryl Eads, and Shirley Hall will help with the check-in process.

Carol reported that she has received only 14 registrations thus far. Several consumers have called to express interest in attending and to ask about the registration process. A number of people have called to ask whether the DMH will offer scholarships to the conference. She displayed the

Jan let the group know that she has contacted Bradburn's to ask for donations of art supplies such as chalk and colored pencils. She has also contacted Art Mart, but they told her to check back with them later. She described the art room as a place where people may use doing artwork as a way to decompress. Jan will need assistance from committee members in supervising the art room. Committee members also discussed the need for a nurse to be

available in the quiet room to assist people who have medical issues arise. Leigh will try to locate a nurse to staff it. David mentioned that his wife is a nurse and volunteered her to assist with that kind of problem.

## **Fundraising**

At the March meeting of the committee, Marge Parrish volunteered to contact an individual who could potentially prove to offer a large donation. She did not come to the April meeting, so we will need to check with her regarding this lead. Marshall Habilitation Center has agreed to donate a craft item made in their sheltered workshop for the committee to use in a raffle or as a door prize. Leigh asked Sharon Britten if Fulton State Hospital might do something similar, but Sharon said they have sub-contracts from businesses so they do not make things in their vocational program. The committee discussed about potential donors. Businesses mentioned include Bass Pro Shops, pharmaceutical companies, Express Scripts, Lowes, and Menards. Robert suggested people who live in the same community that plan to go to the conference might want to get together to work on fundraising projects such as car washes or bake sales.

## **Publicity:**

The DMH will devote one of its Mental Health Images programs to the conference. Jeannie Henry and Lois Thomas will interview Robert and Davis for the program at 10:00 am Friday, May 1<sup>st</sup> at 10:00 am at the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education. Bob Bax has said DESE has agreed to offer copies of the program to committee members so they may ask their local television stations to air it. If a station does agree to use the video, Bob needs to know what format the station wants so that DESE can get it ready for them. Kalei Holder will also interview them for an article she plans to write for the DMH Communiqué newsletter. Kalei has agreed to provide an electronic copy of it to Leigh so that she may forward it to the group. If they like, committee members may give copies of it to their local newspapers to run. Jan reported she had the names and contact information for some radio stations, and she agreed to look into setting up radio interviews. Leigh noted Lois Thomas set up the blog for publicity purposes, but no one has updated it recently. Committee members expressed some confusion as to how to make a post and what to include in it. Lois joined the meeting briefly to review how to use the blog.

## **Meeting Date and Agenda Topics**

The steering committee decided to schedule the next two months to ensure room availability. The May meeting is on Wednesday, May 27<sup>th</sup>. Agenda items for the May meeting include:

- Reviewing the Proposals for Presentations and Workshops
- Developing Program Agenda
- Committee Reports

The June meeting will take place on Friday, June 19<sup>th</sup>.

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